

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF KANSAS THEATRE

the marquee • volume 12 • no. 3

Spring, 1986



We play a
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We don't share the spotlight. We don't even share the applause. But we do share the belief that quality of life in Kansas is enhanced by the quality of its theatre.

Which is why the Southwestern Bell Foundation, at the recommendation of Southwestern Bell Telephone, is providing grants to help support the fine work of civic and community theatres across Kansas.

We hope to give Kansans a chance to enjoy more good theatre, more often. So much so, that we even sponsor special "theatre nights" for senior citizen groups and school kids.

It's all part of a program, in partnership with the Association of Kansas Theatre, called Kansas Arts Excellence. And it's just one of the many ways we're lending a hand right here at home.



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SEEM-TO-BE PLAYERS 1986-87 TOUR

"AMERICARTOON!", a "comedy breakout," has been announced as the tour offering for 1986-87 of Ric Averill's Seem-to-Be Players. Described as an "alternative to dull Saturday morning television," the one-hour performance includes: "The Spider and the Fly," a memory of 1950's musical looniness, "The Great Alphabet Robbery," some kid gangster's discovery of the value of letters, and other live theatre fun guaranteed to "Knock Your Socks Off!" Underwriting funds will be provided by KAC and MAAA. Contact: Ric Averill, 913/842-6622 or 843-9444.

SUMMER MARQUEE

Complete coverage of our 1986 Convention, awards, and keynote speeches will be included, as well as our Summer Theatre Directory. **TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: PLEASE NOTIFY THE ART OFFICE OF YOUR SUMMER ADDRESS IMMEDIATELY!!!**



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Southwestern Bell Foundation, in cooperation with the Association of Kansas Theatre, has established a Kansas Arts Excellence Program to support civic and community theatres across the state. Arts Excellence grants from the Southwestern Bell Foundation, totaling \$50,000, are being offered in two separate categories—Local Production Underwriting and Special Developmental Projects. Local theatre groups may apply for grants in both categories.



Local Underwriting

Before the curtain goes up on a local theatre production, an expensive commitment has been made. Royalties, set design, costumes, advertising . . . all are expensive but necessary parts of successful theatre productions.

Southwestern Bell Foundation would like to help defray some of these costs. Arts Excellence grants will be awarded in Kansas through local Community Relations Managers based on local cultural needs, the quality of a theatre group's past performances, opportunities for local promotions and grant availability.

The Southwestern Bell Foundation will make grants totaling \$40,000 to underwrite local theatre groups' productions in 1986. Theatres interested in participating in the Local Production Underwriting Program should contact their local Southwestern Bell Telephone Community Relations Manager listed in this brochure. *The deadline for returning an application for an underwriting grant to your Community Relations Manager is April 15, 1986.*

Special Developmental Projects

A \$10,000 Southwestern Bell Foundation grant has been made to the Association of Kansas Theatre to sponsor the Special Developmental Projects portion of the Kansas Arts Excellence Program.

Amateur theatre groups throughout the state are eligible to request \$300 or more for Special Developmental Projects. Groups should request a portion of the project's total projected amount. Grants may be requested in any of the following categories:

■ **Artist in Residence.** Allows a community theatre to bring in a director, designer, costumer, playwright, musical director, choreographer, professional actor/actress for the purpose of upgrading the quality of production and teaching the working members of the theatre group new techniques in some aspect of production.

■ **New Program.** Allows a community theatre to launch a supplemental theatrical program such as a children's theatre, senior adult theatre, readers' theatre or an experimental theatre program.

■ **Technical Assistance.** Allows a community theatre to hire a consultant in theatre management to help set goals and objectives, develop appropriate bylaws, establish a financial accounting system, or develop more effective methods for recruiting and retaining volunteers.

A joint review panel consisting of representatives from the Association of Kansas Theatre, the Kansas Arts Commission and Southwestern Bell Telephone will award grants based upon the merits of each proposal.

Criteria for Grants

All local theatre groups must meet the following requirements:

- Must be an amateur theatre group with no paid actors or production crew.
- Must have a Board of Directors composed of local citizens.
- Must have existed for at least one year prior to requesting a grant.
- Must be financially solvent.
- Must be organizational members of the Association of Kansas Theatre. (Non-members may join the association by including membership dues along with their grant applications.)

Entry Deadlines

All applications for Special Developmental Project grants must be completed by April 15, 1986 and returned to: Kansas Arts Excellence Program, 1334 Lakeside Dr., Topeka, KS 66604. Complete the entire application and attach all requested information.

Grant Applications

Theatre groups applying for a grant must complete an application and provide the following information:

- Previous year's financial report or audit.
- Current operating budget.
- Playbills or programs from at least two previous productions.
- An itemized budget for the production/special project.

Grant applications may be obtained from your local Southwestern Bell Telephone Community Relations Manager listed in this brochure or by writing to the Association of Kansas Theatre, 1334 Lakeside Dr., Topeka, Kansas 66604.

Evaluation

Within 90 days following the completion of a funded project or production, theatre groups will be required to provide a written evaluation of the event along with a financial report, playbill, attendance summary and samples of advertising and media coverage.

SECONDARY SCHOOL THEATRE REPORT

The following people were in attendance at the Secondary School Division Meeting on February 16, 1986, at the Doubletree Hotel in Overland Park:

Marilyn Harrison, Blue Valley Middle School
Allyson Moon, Central Heights High School
Nancy Kelley, Lowther Middle School, Emp.
Sharon Liddle, Chanute High School
Leslie Anne Coats, Paola High School
Pat Foltz, Wamego High School
Shirley Windhorst, Minneapolis High School
Terry McGonigle, Wichita Hts. High School
Gina Phillips, Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy
Roger Ramseyer, Olathe South High School
Sally Six Hersh, West Junior High, Lawrence
Mark A. Gordon, Jefferson West High School
James R. Opelt, Gardner-Edgerton High S.
Gwen Warner, Solomon High School
Margaret Ogle, Shawnee Heights High School

Robin Rose Mesh, Bishop Miege High School
Patricia Fox, Music Theatre of Wichita
Dale Louis Carey, State Board of Education
Diane Egbert, Pierson Junior High School
Terry Simmons, Indian Trail Junior High
Royce Fleming, USD 501, Administration Ctr.
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Jeff Montague, Seaman High School
Twila Schneiders, Sacred Heart High School
Kate Goodrich, Santa Fe Trail Junior High
Hope Hawkins, Pembroke Hill School
Roger Hawkins, Pembroke Hill School
Lee Claussen, Highland Park High School
Myrna Wegner, Topeka Public Schools
Teresa Stohs, Secondary School Theatre Chair

The following is a list of items that were discussed:

1. Voted on Nominating Committee to go from 6 to 3
2. Voted to put a double slate for AKT President-Elect. With two names, one would be elected president-elect and the other would become a member at large
3. Several people present said they did not know about AKT, even after several years of teaching.
4. Scholarships for teachers is a good idea
5. Many came to convention because of focus on secondary education and multiple contacts.
6. Want to include focus on middle and elementary teachers
7. Want secondary meetings at convention: meals, special sessions with guests--to bring in a secondary specialist was great, but due to illness in his family, and his consequent early departure, we didn't get to talk to him
8. Want District meetings in Kansas, in addition to Division meetings--get to network geographically
9. Interested in college credit for attending convention, but didn't really know about it (it was offered through K.U.)
10. Problems with AKT membership year--why not conference to conference, Jan-Dec.?
11. Start convention on Friday a.m. so workshops aren't doubled up. Want to attend or have chance to attend all workshops.
12. Very concerned about next year--what will happen to Secondary then?
13. Interested in adjudication of plays, but not necessarily by "big shots."
14. Will send in calendar of events.

15. From think tank discussions, Pot Pourri idea fits right in (contact Teresa).
16. Really appreciate the chance for recognition this year--a long time coming.
17. Teachers want colleges to offer them summer classes they need.
18. Want to set up district reps; a sign-up sheet was sent around the room. Teresa will follow up.
19. Want to work with Thespians; not unite conventions, but some joint efforts.
20. Want to build Secondary membership to 150; want to have a convention about secondary education again in 2 years. Maybe from think tank approach.
21. Think tank, then meetings is good.
22. Need more time for Division meetings.

Hopefully this captures most of the ideas expressed in the meeting. It was great to have so many attend!! And your input was super!!!

I look forward to hearing from you all. Do not hesitate to send me your ideas, or give me a call. I will be in touch about next year's convention as soon as I know anything definite. Meantime, don't lose your enthusiasm. Write to your legislators. Write to the State Board of Education, especially to Dale Carey, Harold Blackburn, and Ray Linder who attended the Convention.

For those secondary people who missed the Division meeting, it's not too late to get active. Our goal is to build our membership so it's up to you to contact friends who might be interested in joining. -- Teresa

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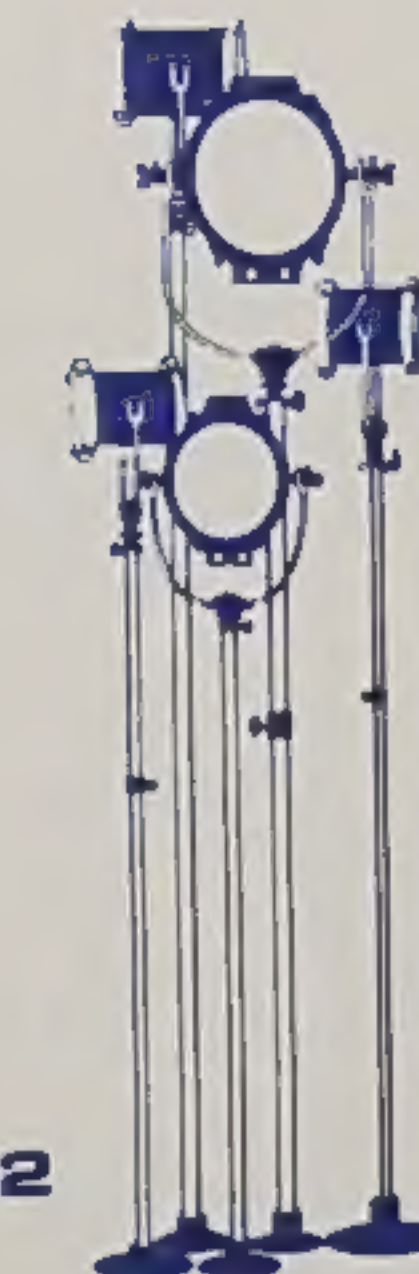
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MISSION: QUALITY THEATRE IN THE ACADEMIC SETTING - THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

by Jerry Proffit

(Remarks delivered at a college/university/secondary school theatre conference at the Pennsylvania State University Nov. 10, 1984 - sponsored by Theatres of Pennsylvania)

It is a pleasure to be here today to talk about something which is very important to me--theatre in the secondary schools. I have been a high school theatre teacher for 22 years. The challenge, excitement, and possibilities which that position offers are what sustain my enthusiasm for teaching. I am speaking to you not from the position of having a lot of answers or of having made great accomplishments, but from the position of a teacher who believes in the value of theatre and who is constantly striving to find the best way to help students grow in their skills and appreciation of the art of theatre.

As theatre teachers who are teaching five classes a day, directing three or four productions a year, and fulfilling umpteen other duties and obligations which fill our lives, we are sometimes faced with doubts--wondering if all the hours, frustration, and occasional artistic disasters are worth the effort. Why are we doing theatre? Why should there be theatre programs in the secondary schools?

A recent paper by a psychologist from the University of Chicago, M. Csikszentmihaly, supports something we in theatre have known for a long time. He says that most people working in the theatre know deep down that the real reason for involvement is what one gets from the performance--what John Dewey called the aesthetic experience, the state of mind complete in itself that needs no goal outside itself. Csikszentmihaly further says, "It is not necessary to disguise theatre into a character building activity or into a temple of learning. It makes more sense to face the fact that what happens on the stage is a reality in its own right, sufficient unto itself and needs no bolstering from the outside."

Teachers of theatre understand this aesthetic experience. They have felt it themselves and they have heard students talk about it--the excitement, fun and fulfillment of being on stage, whether through improvisation in the classroom or in public performances. There is an exhilaration of being more than one is or simply of other

than one is in everyday life.

Of course, we work with those who need more justification for theatre. The intrinsic value of theatre is too nebulous. We have to justify our jobs, our course offerings, and our budgets by identifying the many extrinsic values. COMING TO OUR SENSES presents a strong case for the importance of the arts in the schools and is an excellent source because the authors are not theatre people who might be suspected of being biased. The authors recognize that the schools today are very regimented, perhaps more so in recent years with the emphasis on "back to basics," and that there is little opportunity in the regular classroom for creativity and invention. The stress is on acquisition of prescribed skills, on conformity and submission. The arts, however, are tangible and experiential. They make concepts clear, memorable, and organized. Involvement in theatre leads students to imaginative solutions to problems rather than reproducing "right answers." Because theatre is a primary and dynamic representation of humanity, creating it can diminish cultural and racial estrangement. Involvement in theatre requires constant judgment and thus it informs choices, declares values, defines the self and puts events and patterns into perspective. Involvement in a production of 1776, for example, whether as a student member of the cast or as a member of the crew, will bring the period, the conflicts, and the significance of that historical event more completely into the student's understanding than the standard classroom lecture, reading assignment, or discussion. Scene work with such plays as A RAISIN IN THE SUN and A DIARY OF ANNE FRANK will more likely reduce prejudices than the most pious lecture.

We know that adolescence is a difficult and tense time filled with problems that, for most teens, are inevitable. A successful transition from childhood to adulthood depends on satisfactorily dealing with these problems. Traditional societies provide rituals and rites of initiation and well-defined role models. Today's youth

Quality Theatre in the Academic Setting--The Secondary School, continued

have the almost impossible task of identifying values and models in our complex society full of conflict and ambiguity. Theatre deals with the problems of identity and values. It is an excellent context for self discovery, an outlet for the enormous energy of youth and a stimulation for the imagination. It's true that the arts in general provide many of these extrinsic values which have been mentioned, but it is very clear to me that no other art form provides the comprehensive experience that theatre does. When we create theatre, we use all our senses; it requires a total physical and mental involvement which results in a more memorable and significant experience.

There are many sources which list the extrinsic values of theatre in education. It is interesting to note that of the twelve goals for schooling in the United States as analyzed by Goodlad, at least ten can be significantly developed through theatre in education: a) intellectual development, b) enculturation, c) interpersonal relations, d) autonomy, e) citizenship, f) creativity and aesthetic perception, g) self-concept, h) emotional and physical well-being, i) moral and ethical character, and j) self-realization. Of these, theatre is probably the best means for developing at least half.

The uninformed may not agree, but to me, it is absolutely clear that theatre is vitally important in the schools. But what is the ideal program for the secondary school? We realize that certainly there is no one program that would do for all the schools across the country. Each community has unique characteristics which must be considered in developing a program, and there are a number of sources which offer suggestions for programs. As an example, the criteria which I now suggest came from materials from both the Virginia and the Illinois Departments of Education:

1. Theatre and dramatic experiences should be available for all students. Ideally, the theatre teacher should have time to explore ways of interesting a broader segment of the student body through work with English classes or by providing mini-courses for students in study halls. One of my colleagues in a neighboring school developed a program using his production of MEDEA to introduce freshmen to the process of theatre. Selecting the scene between Medea and Jason, the student actors

first improvised a parallel contemporary conflict, then did a reading with the director's stopping them to make comments, and finally they presented the finished scene in costume. Connected with that project was the distribution of information about the theatre program, the classes, and pointers about the responsibilities of a theatre audience. The program increased attendance at the play, improved the general audience behavior and had a positive influence on class enrollment the following year.

2. A theatre program should be comprehensive. All aspects of theatre should be included: acting, directing, design, stagecraft, elements of costume and make-up, playwriting, academic study of history, criticism, and theories. A comprehensive program will reach the casually interested student with introductory and survey courses and will also provide the special student with in-depth experience and study in advanced courses. A well-planned program will expose students to whatever theatre is in the surrounding area and bring in theatre artists for giving instruction in specialized areas.

3. The ideal theatre program should be an integral part of the school experience. Just providing theatre classes and mounting productions are not enough. Theatre programs can easily become isolated and elitist. Ways to connect with the total school program should be developed, ways such as preparing scenes from literature which the English classes are working on taking the scenes into the classrooms, selecting plays which will supplement the curricula of different departments, presenting student/faculty productions, and even providing mimes and clowns for school pep assemblies.

4. The theatre program should include but not be limited to well-directed extra-curricular productions. The productions and classes in theatre arts should be independent of each other, but students should certainly realize the inter-relationship between the two. The classes will reach some students who can't or won't audition for the productions; the productions will reach those students who can't work the theatre classes into their schedules. The production schedule should offer a variety of experiences for the students--dramas, comedies, musicals, children's shows, student-written shows, student-directed shows,

Quality Theatre in the Academic Setting--the Secondary School, continued

shows which tour, classical plays as well as contemporary plays. During his/her four years of high school, the student should have experienced a variety of styles, periods, and forms of theatre.

5. The theatre offerings should be taught by people who are thoroughly trained and educated in theatre. An untrained teacher/director can be very detrimental to a theatre program. It is probably better to have no theatre than to have it overseen by incompetent or ill-equipped people.

6. The extra-curricular productions must be directed by a well-trained theatre artist who is given class-load teaching credit for directing and producing a play or at least is given a substantial stipend to compensate for the long after-school and weekend hours.

It is difficult to identify specific outstanding theatre programs in the secondary schools. What might be an outstanding program for one school, based on location, funds, community support, etc., could be an inadequate program for another school. The Rockefeller Fund selects ten schools each year with outstanding arts programs, some of which have been particularly strong in theatre. In addition, the Secondary School Theatre Association each year honors a high school teacher who has an outstanding theatre program. More importantly, each of us, as teachers committed to the art, needs to assess our own programs periodically--to determine ways in which we can improve and to ascertain what it will take to bring about the improvements.

At a recent sharing of ideas in the Midwest, a list of ways used by teachers to advance their programs was developed. Although some of the suggestions are not particularly new, they may be helpful to teachers who have not tried them:

1. The most important element in developing ideal theatre programs is to do quality work. Even if teachers mount only one production a year and/or teach only one theatre class, the work must be of the highest quality possible. Careful attention must be given to every detail of the production; detailed planning must go into the class.

2. Know the rationale that will help you to support your theatre program and learn

to present it often and with vigor. Keep aware of what's happening in your field by belonging to your state and national theatre associations. Go to your administrators and school boards and explain what great value you are providing the students. Thank them for their support, even if it is minor.

3. Be a politician. Know who your state, city, and school officials are. Send them tickets to your productions. Invite them to an opening and a reception to honor them for their support for the arts. Politicians are always looking for settings in which they might meet their constituents and will respond to your plans.

4. Contribute to the life of your community. Give technical advice to the elementary and junior high schools. Lend costumes, properties, and lights. Provide entertainment to organizations. Join civic clubs. Stage the 4th of July event, etc.

5. Know how your school is financed and how the budget works. Perhaps there is a category other than theatre from which you could get your equipment. Try to gain an ally on your maintenance staff who might run some of your equipment needs through the maintenance budget. Or check with other departments which do not use up budgeted funds for expendables. Perhaps they would be willing to purchase some of your needs.

6. Start a parent support group. If there is already a music parent group in your school, ask them to expand and to become a fine arts group. They can help by publicizing productions, securing costumes and props, and raising funds, and are excellent ambassadors for your program.

7. Brag about your work. Let people know your educational philosophy. You cannot afford to be modest. Create special events which cause news--a visiting artist, a returning alumni who has made a name in the arts, etc.

8. Mail your program to VIPs. Include in your programs statements about the value of your work--what the students are gaining through their involvement.

It's true that high school theatre director/teachers are already extremely busy and the thought of adding activities from



Kansas Community

Theatre Conference

The important dates for community theatres are March 27, 28, 29, 1987...be sure to mark your calendars. That's when you will be attending the Festival of community theatre productions (now called AACT/FEST) and the AKT Convention.

We've started the planning and I'm already getting excited about the super quality work you people will be presenting.

Another date to circle on your calendar is October 4, 1986. Since we had so little time to talk and share at our Division meeting in February, we are going to gather October 4th in Salina. This will also be "Tech Day," so you can see the AACT/FEST theatre and receive all the details concerning the Festival. You'll receive information in August about our KCTC meeting--just keep the date open.

Meanwhile, if you have any questions, needs or suggestions, please call me. I am here to represent you with our state organization, so give me your comments. Phone: 913/825-9303.

--Linda Lea Borden, KCTC President

Quality Theatre, continued

the above list might seem overwhelming, but adding even one for this year and another next year will mean gaining more ground for your program. But most of all, remember that the work you are doing is of great value as it contributes significantly to the growth and healthy development of so many students whose lives you touch each day. Good luck!

(Jerry Proffit is Director of Dramatics at Niles North High School, Skokie, IL, and Past-President of the Secondary School Theatre Association. This article is reprinted with permission.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wichita Community Theatre is sponsoring a workshop by Danny Newman, guru of season subscription sales and author of SUBSCRIBE NOW! on Saturday, May 17th in Wichita. There will be a registration fee. Contact Business Manager, Piet Knetsch, at 316-686-1282 for details.

Theatre for Young America, Overland Park will be touring THE UGLY DUCKLING, adapted by Gene Mackey from the story by Hans Christian Anderson, in October, November and December 1986. The KAC will fund 50% of costs in Kansas on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact: Gene Mackey, 913-648-4600.

University of Kansas Theatre for Young People (KUTYP) has announced its Spring 1987 Tour: The Paper Bag Players' REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL, by Judith Martin. Subsidies for performances may be obtained from the KAC on a "mini-grant" basis. For more information: Dr. Jed Davis, 913-864-3944.

The Department of Theatre and Media Arts, in association with the Hall Center for the Humanities at the University of Kansas, announces a new journal: THE JOURNAL OF DRAMATIC THEORY AND CRITICISM. Published in October and April, the Journal will address the theoretical issues associated with performance and performance texts. Associate editors include: Rosemarie Bank, David Bergeron, John Countryman, Weldon Durham, Roger Gross, Richard Hornby, Felicia Londre, Charles Lyons, David McDonald, and Bert States. Individual subscriptions are \$9, institutional subscriptions are \$16; student subscriptions are \$8. Write: Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Dept. of Theatre/Media Arts, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045.

The National High School Institute will be held at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL June 29-August 2, 1986. Core curriculum for theatre includes acting, voice/movement, analysis and interpretation of text, and aesthetics of performance; elective workshops are also available. Deadline May 1. Contact: Nat'l High School Inst., Theatre Arts Division, Northwestern Univ., 1881 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201. Call: 312/491-3026.

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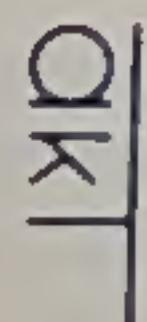
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